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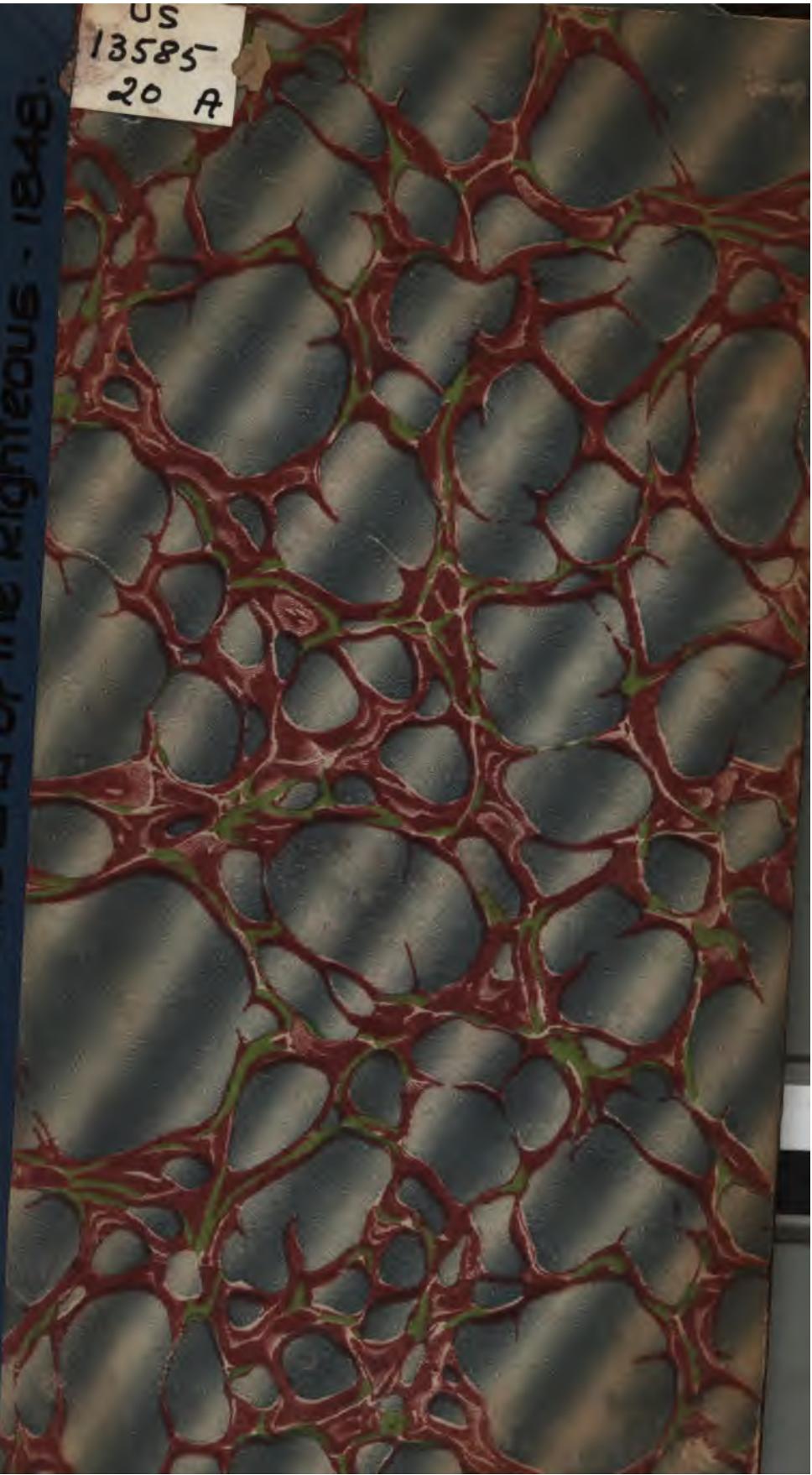
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REV. MR. DURFEE'S DISCOURSE,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

**REV. SAMUEL GAY, OF HUBBARDSTON.**



*Mr Stone from her friend  
S. G. Hoarsey.*

The Character and End of the Righteous.

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A

## S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

THE REV. SAMUEL GAY, OF HUBBARDSTON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOUTH CHURCH AND SOCIETY,

IN DEDHAM, NOV. 5, 1848.

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BY REV. CALVIN DURFEE,  
Pastor of the South Congregational Church in Dedham.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTICE.

As the late Mr. Gay of Hubbardston was a native of this place,—married his wife here,—has relatives residing among us,—and has frequently preached to this people in years past,—I was naturally led to deliver a discourse with reference to his sudden departure. It was the first effort of my pen while I was slowly recovering from a sickness which had confined me to my room for a number of weeks. Of course it was not intended for publication. And it is now yielded for that purpose, first, because a sum sufficient to warrant an edition has been put into my hands; and, secondly, because no other biographical notice of Mr. Gay's ministerial life is likely to be given to the public. C. D.

*South Dedham, Dec. 5, 1848.*

## S E R M O N .

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### ISAIAH LVII. 1.

THE RIGHTEOUS PERISHETH, AND NO MAN LAYETH IT TO HEART; AND MERCIFUL MEN ARE TAKEN AWAY, NONE CONSIDERING THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS TAKEN AWAY FROM THE EVIL TO COME.

THE Bible divides mankind into two great classes. One is called righteous, the other wicked; one is called saints, the other sinners; one is called holy, and the other unholy. And to one or the other of these two classes, every individual of the human race belongs. It cannot in truth be said concerning a single one, that he belongs to neither of these classes.

But whatever be the character of men—whether righteous or wicked—they must all die. Death is the common lot of all men by the express appointment of God. “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Piety exempts no one from disease and death. In this respect, “there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.” As to the time and circumstances of their departure from this world, the righteous are not distinguished from the unrighteous. If the righteous are exempt from the *sting*, they are not from the *stroke* of death. In the present life, no essential difference is made in the outward circumstances of these two classes. The difference that is to be made between them is reserved for a future state. And in that future state there will be a

vast and an endless difference between the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked.

It is said in the text, "The righteous perisheth." Nothing more is meant however by the expression, than that they die. "Help, Lord; for the godly man *ceaseth*; for the faithful *fail* from among the children of men." "And no man layeth it to heart." When the righteous are removed by death, survivors do not generally feel and suitably acknowledge the overruling hand of God in their removal. They do not suitably feel what a calamity it is to have the righteous removed from this world. The loss of their prayers, their example and their influence, is an unspeakable loss to friends and to the community. But then, it is comforting to reflect that they are removed from an evil world. "The righteous are taken away from the evil to come."

In further pursuing this subject, I propose

- I. To offer some general remarks on the character of the righteous. And
- II. Mention some of the evils from which they are removed at death.

Death puts an end to the evils and sufferings of none but the righteous. The sufferings of the wicked are immeasurably greater in the future state than they are in this world. It becomes, then, a deeply interesting and most important question,—What is the character of the righteous? There are various shades of character among good men; and yet all good men are essentially alike. There is an almost endless variety of human countenances; and yet the leading, prominent features of all are essentially the same. And I apprehend that the brief sketch, which I am now about to draw of the character of the righteous, will include all who are truly pious. And I fervently pray that I may not be so vague and general in my delineation of the character of the

righteous, as to lead any of you who are not Christians to suppose that you really belong to that class.

Who, then, are the righteous? No man is righteous by nature; for all "by nature are the children of wrath." No one is righteous by education; since it is beyond the power of man to impart those principles and implant those holy desires and aims in the human mind, which constitute a man righteous in the eye of his Creator. But

1. One trait in the character of the righteous is, *they have been regenerated.* A supernatural change has been wrought in the moral state of their souls. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Unless a man has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, whatever he may profess to be, he is beyond all question an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Regeneration is the commencement of holiness in the soul. It is a deep, thorough and abiding change;—a change so great and so important, that it is proper to apply to it the terms, new creation, new birth, and life from the dead. Such a change every truly righteous man has experienced. And in the eye of Him, who looks continually upon the heart, and decides on the character of every man from the state of his heart, no man can be regarded as truly righteous, who has not experienced "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that *every one who doeth righteousness is born of Him.*"

2. Another trait in the character of the righteous is, *they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.* They rest all their hope and expectation on Him for salvation. To every true believer Christ "is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Every true believer

relies on Christ for pardon and light and grace. He confides in the power and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus to keep him from falling. The believer commits himself and all his interests and concerns to the Saviour's disposal, and feels a greater or less degree of security and happiness in being in his hands. Every true believer receives Christ as his Lord and Saviour on the terms in which he is offered in the gospel. Burdened with a sense of guilt, he feels his perishing need of such a Saviour. He cordially consents to be taught by Christ as an *ignorant* sinner; to be saved by him as a *condemned* sinner; and to be governed by him as a *renewed* subject of divine grace. Such an one enjoys a substantial hope of being personally interested in the merits of the Saviour.

3. Another trait in the character of the righteous is, *they love God and observe his precepts*. There can be no acceptable obedience, which does not flow from a sense of God's presence and worthiness, and our obligation to him. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." Where this love does not exist, there can be no true obedience. Unless it is the leading purpose and desire of our hearts to serve, please and glorify God, the greatest of all his commands is disregarded and neglected. When our own personal interest or pleasure is the highest object in our affections and pursuits, then it is that God is overlooked, and his precepts and commands receive from us no acceptable obedience. "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him is verily the love of God perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him."

With David the man who is truly righteous thinks on his ways, and turns his feet unto the testimony of the Lord; he makes haste and delays not to keep his com-

mandments. He wages war with all sinful passions and habits. Convinced of the reasonableness of the divine service, he retraces his sinful ways, and actively devotes himself to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. In all respects he desires and strives to be "a new creature." He ceases to do evil, and learns to do well. No lust is so dear that it cannot be spared; no duty so difficult that it cannot be performed.

4. Another trait in the character of the righteous is, *they cherish feelings of good will towards their fellow men.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." True religion consists essentially in love to God and love to man. No man's character can be acceptable to God, who does not love his neighbor as himself. True religion consists more in benevolent affections towards our fellow men, and in efforts to do them good, especially to promote their spiritual interests, than is generally apprehended. The righteous feel, recognize and acknowledge their obligations to do good to all men as they have opportunity. And, love to man furnishes a motive sufficiently high and commanding to induce Christians to be exemplary in their conduct, and constant and faithful in the discharge of all the social and relative duties, which they owe to their fellow men. The hearts of the righteous are full of benevolent desires and purposes. The prosperity of the church, the happiness of mankind, these are the great objects for which they wish to live and labor.

5. Another trait in the character of the righteous is, *they exercise submission to the will of God under all the allotments of life.* They are willing that the Most High should have the ordering of all events in his own hands. They rejoice that the Lord reigns. They confide in the wisdom and goodness of his government; and patiently submit to all the trials and afflictions, which their Heavenly Father lays upon them. For worlds they would not

have the direction of affairs committed to any other being in the universe. They would not wish to have the disposal of their lot left with themselves. They would feel that there was infinite danger in being left to choose for themselves a single day. Knowing that God is infinitely wise and good and powerful, they feel that his wisdom will enable him to *see* what is for the best ; his goodness will lead him to *choose* what is for the best ; and his power will enable him to *accomplish* what is for the best. Here is a foundation for perfect confidence and complacency in the divine government at all times. The righteous cannot but feel far more safe and secure in the hands of God, than they could in their own, or in the hands of any created being. Under all the evils, trials and afflictions of life, therefore, they are disposed to say, "It is the Lord ; and let him do what seemeth him good." "The cup which my Heavenly Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?" Even in the near prospect of death, the righteous are often "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

And this brings me

II. To mention some of the evils from which the righteous will be removed at death. At death they are immediately and unalterably placed in a condition of unspeakable happiness. It is said in the text, "none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." It is true, they are removed from future evils,—evils to which they would still have been subjected, had they been continued in this world. And it is equally true that they are removed from evils and sufferings of every kind,—present and prospective. The Saviour has kindly forewarned his people, that in the world they shall have tribulation. But the evils and trials of the righteous all terminate here.

Let us then just glance at a few of the evils to which the righteous are exposed in the present life, and from which they will be exempt at death.

1. Our present life is a state of *toil and fatigue*. The sentence passed upon our race in consequence of the first apostacy, was, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake.—In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground." Fatigue and weariness, hunger and thirst, cares and anxieties, are evils common to all men in the present life. From evils and trials of some kind, none are exempt. How easily is the human frame disordered and weakened. Where is the individual who is long exempt from disease and pain? How many days of toil and weariness, and nights of anxiety and solicitude, are passed by the best men on earth? But from all this labor and weariness, this anxiety and solicitude, the righteous are removed at death. Then they enter into a state of rest and peace, from which they go no more out forever.

2. Our present life is a state of *affliction and suffering*. In the afflictions and sufferings of life, the righteous have an equal share with others. Perhaps they have more; for it is said with emphasis, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." There have been times when they have "had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonments;" when "they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." How often have the righteous had to encounter the ill conduct and unkind treatment of others? How often have they had occasion to lament that their efforts to awaken and reform their fellow men, seem to have been put forth in vain? How often have the righteous been called to mourn the loss of some dear and valued friend? How often have their hearts been pained at the thought that there may be in the future state an eternal separation between them and

some whom they tenderly loved in this world? How often does this painful reflection produce a degree of anguish in the heart of every pious minister? These are sufferings and trials peculiar to the righteous. But they are all mercifully ordered, and kindly overruled as a means of purifying saints here, and preparing them for a higher reward hereafter.

3. In their present state the righteous have to struggle against *the pride and corruption of their hearts*. Their remaining imperfection is their greatest grief and burden. It is their continued moral imperfection which leads them so often to exclaim with Isaiah, "Wo is me! for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips";—and with Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Even the best of Christians find so much selfishness and pride, hypocrisy and corruption still cleaving to them, and even mingling in their best services, that they feel that shame and confusion of face belong unto them. "Wherefore they abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes." They often sin against their fellow men. Their sins against God are numerous and aggravating. Their ingratitude is base and unbecoming. They render to God a service which is often cold and formal. Their backslidings and deficiencies are a source of continued grief and sorrow of heart. Hence, death is great gain to the righteous; because death is the dividing line between perfection and imperfection. This must be so, just so certainly as that "there is not *upon earth* a just man that doeth good and sinneth not."

Owing to the remaining pride and selfishness of their hearts, the righteous are often involved in great darkness of mind. They are troubled with many doubts and fears respecting their hope of an interest in Christ. They are exposed to a thousand temptations and dangers,—to the constant suggestions of that great adversary, who is continually going about seeking whom he may devour.

To correct the righteous for their sins and backslidings, God often hides his face from them. And this is the greatest trial or calamity which can befall them in the present life. "Wo unto them when I depart from them." "In his presence is fulness of joy."

"From God departing, they are lost, and rove  
At random, without honor, hope or peace.

Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor ;  
And with Thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

Now how delightful the thought that at death the righteous will be completely and entirely delivered from every evil. Death is the last enemy they will have to encounter ; and even that is sometimes disarmed of its sting. Said the eminent Payson as he lay upon his sick bed :—"Nothing separates me from the celestial city but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission." Death puts a final end to all their sins and sorrows and trials. From the moment of their departure from this world, the righteous rest from their labors, and enter into the joy of their Lord. Sin will no more separate them from God, his love and his service. They will now dwell in his constant presence, where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures forevermore. With what wonder and surprise and delight will they now look back to the state from which they have been delivered. And how will they admire the power and glory of that grace, which has redeemed and sanctified and saved them. With what joy and gratitude will their souls now overflow on finding that they have been safely led to Jesus ; that they have been kept by the power of his grace ; that they have escaped every snare that was spread for their feet ; that they have been brought safely over the sea of temptations, and securely landed on the peaceful shores of immortality ; that they are actually come unto Mount Zion, unto the

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ; and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. O how wonderful, how glorious will then appear the love and grace of that God, who could send his own Son to die for such a depraved and guilty world ; and who could send his Spirit down to renew and sanctify such vile and polluted hearts ! Here saints will find enough to occupy their minds and fill and rejoice their hearts forever.

On a review of what has now been advanced, a number of inferences are obviously suggested. A few only will be briefly noticed. And

1. The character of the righteous *is truly excellent*. It is a renewed and purified character. It bears a resemblance to the divine image. It must then be amiable and excellent. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor." "The saints are the excellent of the earth." God calls them his treasure, his jewels, his inheritance. He measures men according to their true worth and real excellence. In the Scriptures, sinners are represented as lighter than vanity ; as "the chaff to the wheat," in comparison with the righteous. What a wide difference will then be put between these two classes when their true characters shall be disclosed in the light of eternity ? Then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ; while the wicked shall sink down to their own place in all their vileness and guilt.

2. The character of the righteous qualifies them for *extensive usefulness*. The righteousness of Abraham prepared him to be useful. It led him to intercede for the city of Sodom. And on his intercession for that city, God told him, that for the sake of ten righteous, if so

many of that character be found there, he would spare that whole city. Had there been some righteous souls in Israel, God's ancient people might have been saved from the calamities of the Babylonish captivity. He says, [Ezek. xxii. 30, 31.] "I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them."

The world is more indebted to the righteous than it is willing to acknowledge. The influence of a few righteous people in a place is far greater than is generally supposed. The righteous "are the salt of the earth." For their sake this corrupt world is preserved. And who can tell how many blessings come to us every day in answer to their earnest intercessions? Who can tell how many calamities may be averted in answer to their fervent prayers? Who can tell how much we are indebted to their example and influence for the peace and tranquillity which now prevail among us? Who can tell how much we are indebted to their intercession for the day of probation which we enjoy? If these things were duly considered, we should feel what a calamity it is to have the righteous taken away from among us.

3. The death of the righteous conveys *a solemn warning to survivors.* When God is about to manifest his displeasure against an ungrateful and disobedient people, he sometimes manifests that displeasure by removing the righteous from among them. He remembers his people. He shields and protects *them* from evils and calamities, which he intends to bring upon others. The death of the righteous, then, ought to be regarded as a solemn admonition to the living. They ought to lay it seriously to heart; and immediately and earnestly engage in the work of reformation. In the day of affliction survivors should consider and inquire, wherefore it is that God is correcting them. Let them search their hearts and try

their ways and turn unto the Lord. He does not afflict willingly, but for our profit ; to make us partakers of his holiness.

4. We are furnished with gratifying evidence that the late Mr. Gay of Hubbardston, a man personally known to many of my hearers, and the tidings of whose sudden death have recently reached us, was a righteous man. He evidently possessed a character, which, in its leading traits, was in harmony with what was advanced in the early part of this discourse. He exhibited evidence of having been renewed by the Holy Spirit,—that he placed all his hope of salvation on the atonement of Christ,—that he loved God and yielded a uniform obedience to his requirements,—that he cherished feelings of benevolence and good-will towards his fellow-men,—and that he exercised submission to the divine will under all the allotments of life. That there is nothing overdrawn in these statements, may be safely left with the candid judgment of all who were personally acquainted with him. That he has been the means of extensive usefulness, especially among the people to whom he preached the gospel for so many years, there is a sufficient number of witnesses in that place now ready to testify. He has left with survivors the cheering assurance that he lived the life and died the death of the righteous.

But propriety and that respect which are due to the memory of such a man render it suitable for me to give some general outlines of his life and ministerial usefulness. My information respecting him is so limited, that this sketch will be brief and imperfect.

The Rev. SAMUEL GAY was born in this parish, March 16, 1784 ; so that he was sixty-four years old last March. Of his childhood and youth I know of nothing which calls for a particular mention in this place. He was graduated at Harvard University in 1805 ; and afterwards taught school for a while in Roxbury. At what time he gave his heart to the Saviour, and became a subject of

renewing grace, I am unable precisely to state. The same year, however, that he left college, he made a public profession of religion, connecting himself with this church. He studied theology with that eminent divine and distinguished theological instructor, the late Dr. Joseph Lathrop of West Springfield; and was licensed to preach the gospel by the Hampshire Association in August, 1807.

In 1809 Mr. Gay received and accepted an invitation to settle in Andover, North Parish. A council was convened to perform the ordination service, when objections were made to his being ordained, chiefly by two influential individuals. But as these objections did not touch his Christian or ministerial character, the council voted to proceed. But Mr. Gay declined being settled under existing circumstances.

In the course of the next year he received and accepted a call to settle in Hubbardston. In those days of permanency in the ministry, candidates were expected to preach much longer on probation than they do at present. Then it was expected that when a minister was once settled, he would remain settled. Mr. Gay was ordained at Hubbardston, October 16, 1810. And there he passed the remaining days of his life. He was married to Miss Elizabeth Chickering, daughter of the second minister of this place, November 11, 1812; and who continued to share with him the cares and burdens of life to the day of his death. They became the parents of eight children; of whom three only survive; two married daughters and a son.

Mr. Gay was settled the minister of the whole town, and continued to be so, until 1827; when, owing to certain divisions in religious sentiments which took place, the society refused to retain him any longer as their minister. Mr. Gay and the church generally and some of the society maintained decidedly orthodox ground. They chose to walk in the old paths of their Puritan Fathers.

After the separation took place, Mr. Gay was publicly recognized as the Pastor of the Calvinistic church and minister of the society connected with it, November 1, 1827. Here he continued his ministerial labors until 1841; when owing to certain circumstances which Mr. Gay considered unfavorable to his longer continued usefulness there, and not being entirely dependent on his salary for support, he signified his willingness, (if it was the wish of the society,) to resign his pastoral office. A majority of the society acceded to this proposal, and he was dismissed, and a successor, the Rev. Oliver B. Bidwell, was ordained December 1, 1841. The ministry of Mr. Bidwell continued about four or five years; when he requested and obtained a dismission, and the Rev. D. B. Bradford was installed June 17, 1846. A communication which I have just received from the Rev. Mr. Bradford contains the following statements:—"At the time of his death Mr. Gay was acting in harmony with the church and the present pastor,—was a member of our examining committee, and took an active part in such of our social meetings as he was able to attend. He was also at the time of his death a member of the school committee of the town; and as such was beloved and esteemed by his associates in office and the scholars in the several districts. Since I have been the minister here, there has been the most perfect harmony between us. Indeed, I held Mr. Gay in profound respect, and delight to remember and honor him as a father in the ministry. In his death I feel that I have lost one of my best friends; a kind helper in time of need, and a most judicious counsellor in ecclesiastical matters. Such has been my confidence in his friendship, that I have never in a single instance felt the least embarrassment from his presence, during my whole ministry here. This is certainly saying much in his favor."

During Mr. Gay's ministry in Hubbardston, which continued 31 years, he admitted to the church 294 persons,

which averages almost ten a year. This statement of itself furnishes ample proof that his ministry was one of more than ordinary usefulness. Few ministers in a small country congregation admit so many to the church annually. It is said, that there were during his ministry four seasons of special refreshing from the presence of the Lord. In December, 1839, Mr. Gay wrote thus to a near relative:—"I have a Bible class every Friday evening at my house. It was commenced four weeks ago. More than thirty different individuals have attended; and they appear interested. I attend several meetings each week, and there is at the present time an interesting state of things among us. Several young persons, it is hoped, have truly experienced religion." So great and extensive was one of the revivals which was enjoyed during Mr. Gay's ministry, that the number of the members of the church was doubled in the course of twelve months. Mr. Gay baptized 740 children and adults. He solemnized 227 marriages. And 736 deaths occurred in the town during his ministry.

Amiable in his disposition, kind in his family relations, regular in his habits, punctual to his engagements, affectionate and familiar in his intercourse with his people, Mr. Gay secured the respect and confidence of all who were personally acquainted with him. From his youth he maintained an unblemished character. Such a character contributed greatly to his usefulness in the world, and that peace of mind, which he appeared so uniformly to enjoy.

As a Christian Mr. Gay was sincere, consistent, uniform and exemplary. He aimed to keep his heart with all diligence; and to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things.

As a theologian he was more thoroughly versed in the Bible than in human commentaries. His sermons were characterized by plainness of style, clearness of illustra-

tion, and the simplicity of the gospel. His manner was solemn, earnest and affectionate.

Mr. Gay preached the last Sabbath afternoon but one before his death ; and took a part in the public services the very last time he entered the sanctuary. He loved the ministry and was ever ready to engage in it.

The traits of character for which he was most distinguished, were, if I mistake not, firmness, forgiveness and perseverance. When convinced that he was in the path of duty, he seemed to fear nothing ; and what he undertook he prosecuted with diligence. He did not easily become weary in well-doing.

It is impossible for a man to occupy a public station for many years without meeting with some trials and difficulties. Especially will every minister of the gospel frequently have to encounter men and measures, which will severely test his firmness. The ministers and churches in this commonwealth have not been strangers to the effects of agitation and excitement within the last thirty years. If Mr. Gay met with opposition or insult in pursuing, what he deemed to be the path of ministerial duty, he was always ready to forgive those who had injured his reputation or hurt his feelings. So prominent was this spirit of forgiveness in him, that he ultimately secured the respect and good-will of those who differed from him in religious opinions. Said a neighboring clergyman,—“I have ever considered him a firm, judicious and able minister of the gospel.”

His death produced a deep sensation through the town where he had so long lived and preached and prayed, and where he was held in high esteem by all ages and all denominations. It is reported that other denominations entertained as high respect for his moral, Christian and ministerial character as his own. His departure from this world was very sudden and unexpected. On the morning of October 16,—*just thirty-eight years to a day from his*

*ordination*,—he arose in the morning in his usual health. He conversed and prayed in his family with more than ordinary interest and animation. After dinner he went into the field near his house in company with another man, and while at work, suddenly fell and expired. His summons was sudden, but he was prepared. Death found him

“Tranquil amidst alarms,  
It found him in the field.”

At *mid-day* came the cry,  
‘To meet thy God prepare ;’  
He heard, and caught his Captain’s eye ;  
Then, strong in faith and prayer,  
His spirit, with a bound,  
Burst its encumbering clay ;  
His tent, at *sun-set*, on the ground  
A darkened ruin lay.

The pains of death are past,  
Labor and sorrow cease,  
And life’s long warfare closed at last,  
His soul is found in peace.  
Soldier of Christ ! well done ;  
Praise be thy new employ ;  
And while eternal ages run,  
Rest in thy Saviour’s joy.”

Let me remind you in conclusion, beloved hearers, that the time will soon arrive when you will send forth the lingering, longing, fervent prayer, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” To die such a death, you must now “break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by turning unto the Lord.” You have seen how the righteous die. You know their end was peace. You have seen them look forward and anticipate the hour of their departure from this world, with all the tranquillity and joy with which “the hireling pants for the evening shade.” You have heard them express their confident hope, that after a few more struggles with sin and death, their freed spirits would go to mingle in the society and employments of

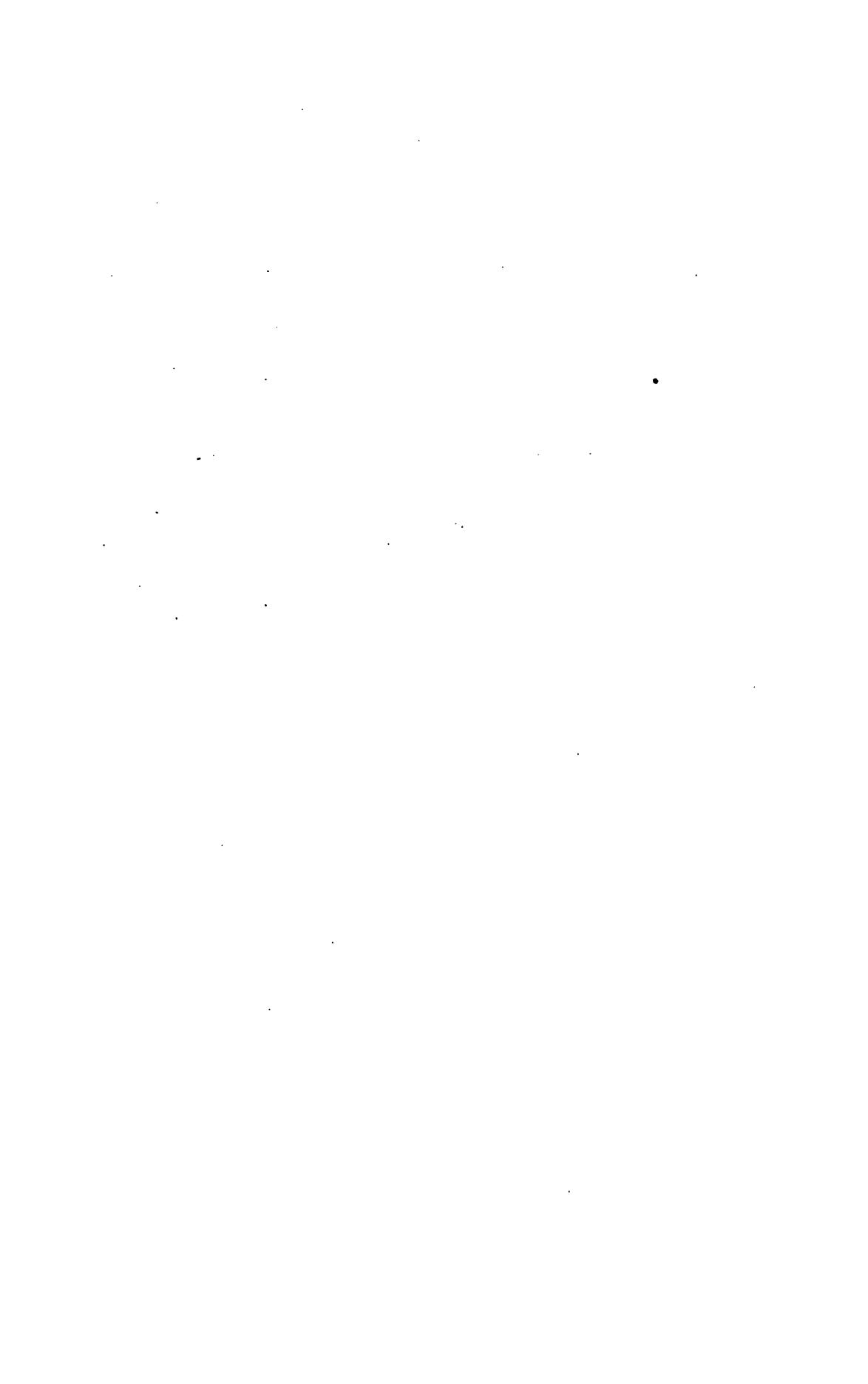
the heavenly world. Tell me, did you not, then, as you stood by the dying bed of the Christian, almost exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Have you good reason now to hope that you are "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?" Are your present characters and pursuits such as to inspire the hope that you are prepared for the end and rewards of the righteous? If not, I beseech you, postpone a preparation no longer. Think how uncertain is your life. "It is a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Remember how suddenly and unexpectedly our friend, whose life and end we have been contemplating, was summoned away. Your end may be equally sudden; your departure equally unexpected. If you would die the death of the righteous, and have your last end like his, you must secure the character, and live the life of the righteous. It is by your character that you will be judged. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

He that feareth God and worketh righteousness shall be accepted of him, "and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." "Say ye to the righteous it shall be well with him; for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." With such animating prospects in full view,—

"Who, who would live always, away from his God,  
Away from yon heaven—that blissful abode,  
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,  
And the noon-tide of glory eternally reigns?  
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,  
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;  
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,  
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."







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